

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 13-25 are presented for consideration in lieu of claims 1, 2 and 4-12, which have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 13 and 21 are independent. Support for these claims can be found in the original application, as filed. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action.

Claims 1-3, 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 7-267192 to Yagishita in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,196,529 to Shtarkman et al. (Applicant notes that claim 3 was canceled in the Amendment filed on May 9, 2005.) Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Yagashita document in view of the Sharkman et al. patent as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,876,012 to Haga et al. Claims 7-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the Yagashita document in view of the Sharkman et al. patent as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,496,248 to Tanaka. Applicant submits that the cited art, whether taken individually or in combination, does not teach many features of the present invention, as previously recited in claims 1, 2 and 4-12. Therefore, these rejections are respectfully traversed. Nevertheless, Applicant submits that

claims 13-25, as presented, amplify the distinctions between the present invention and the cited art.

In one aspect of the present invention, independent claim 13 recites a supporting apparatus for supporting a member which mounts a movable stage to a base. The apparatus includes a first magnet arranged on one of the member and the base, and a second magnet unit arranged on the other of the member and the base on which the first magnet is arranged, and arranged so that the first magnet is interposed. Magnetized directions of the first magnet and the second magnet unit are perpendicular to a supporting direction of the member, and a width size of the second magnet unit in a perpendicular direction to the magnetized directions and the supporting direction is larger than a width size of the first magnet.

In another aspect of the present invention, independent claim 21 recites a supporting apparatus for supporting a member which mounts a movable stage to a base in a first direction. The supporting apparatus includes a first magnet arranged on the member, and magnetized in a second direction perpendicular to the first direction, a second magnet unit arranged on the base, and arranged so that the first magnet is interposed, and a moving device for moving a plurality of magnets which constitute the second magnet unit in a third direction perpendicular to the first direction and the second direction.

By such an arrangement, the relative position of the first magnet and the second magnet unit makes it possible to control the spring constant (that is, stiffness) in the perpendicular direction to the magnetized directions and the supporting direction. In a case in which an

external force (such as vibration) is applied, the applied vibration can be suppressed because the spring constant is controlled to be substantially zero.

Applicant submits that the cited art, whether taken individually or in combination, does not teach or suggest such features of the present invention, as recited in independent claims 13 and 21.

The Yagashita document shows an anti-vibration unit in which a magnet 3 and magnets 4 are used for supporting a cabin. In that document, the magnet 3 and the magnets 4 are arranged in the same direction in which the cabin is supported, and the magnets are magnetized. Applicant submits, however, that the Yagashita document does not teach or suggest anything regarding a feature of width size of a second magnet unit in a perpendicular direction to the magnetized directions and a supporting direction being larger than a width size of the first magnet, as in the present invention recited in independent claim 13, for example. Likewise, Applicant submits that the Yagashita document does not teach or suggest the arrangement of the first magnet and the second magnet unit and the moving means for moving a plurality of magnets which constitute the second magnet unit in a third direction perpendicular to the first direction and second direction, as in the present invention recited in independent claim 21. Accordingly, the Yagashita document does not teach or suggest salient features of Applicant's present invention, as recited in the independent claims.

Applicant further submits that the remaining art cited does not cure the deficiencies noted above with respect to the Yagashita document.

The Shtarkman et al. patent shows a vibration control system in which a damping response is changed based on a magnitude of an electrical or magnetic field. The Examiner relies on the Haga et al. patent for teaching the use of an electromagnetic actuator for generating a force that acts on a support target. Further, the Examiner relies on the Tanaka patent for showing a device manufacturing apparatus and a method, including an anti-vibration apparatus, as well as an exposure apparatus that is arranged in a vacuum chamber. Applicant submits, however, that none of the Shtarkman et al., Haga et al., or Tanaka patents teaches or suggests the salient features of Applicant's present invention, as recited in independent claims 13 and 21, which have been discussed above. Accordingly, Applicant submits that those patents add nothing to the teachings of the Yagashita document that would render obvious Applicant's present invention, as recited in independent claims 13 and 21.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that the present invention, as recited in independent claims 13 and 21, is patentably defined over the cited art, whether that art is taken individually or in combination.

Dependent claims 14-20 and 22-25 also should be deemed allowable, in their own right, for defining other patentable features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Further individual consideration of these dependent claims is requested.

Applicant further submits that this Amendment After Final Rejection clearly places this application in condition for allowance. This Amendment was not earlier presented because Applicant believed that the prior Amendment placed the application in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, entry of the instant Amendment, as an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, is requested under 37 CFR 1.116.

Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance are also requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010 All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven E. Warner", is written over a horizontal line.

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